

5/22/70

Dear Phil and Gary,

On returning from a day in Washington, including a neurological exam, to save time, I taped what I told my wife, am sending that to Gary, and asked him then to send it to Phil. But suddenly I think Phil has no tape recorder.

~~When~~ One of the several purposes of this letter is in the event you haven't a machine to tell you know the tests were normal, with a suggestion of vascular condition(s) not exceptional at 57, and the educated guess that what really happened is that I did fall and sustained a temporary amnesia that went back to the moment of the fall. EEG, X-rays normal.

If you have a recorder, there may be an occasional reference to what might not be clear unless I tell you what also stands by itself: I've won the first assassination "Freedom of Information" suit against Justice. I think it is the first time they went all the way to court to resist and then backed down, settling by producing what they had denied even having. You may be hearing more of this.

The second is a question to both of you. There is a young N.O. woman ~~x~~ who was a baffling source for me. Without knowing what she was doing apparently, she led me to pure gold. I suspect she was on some kind of drugs. She is both exceedingly bright, daring beyond measure, and as smooth and unabashed an accomplished liar as I've ever met. We lost contact when I got angry with her for breaking a promise to get out of town with me and separate the truth from the fiction as best she could. I suspect her ego would not tolerate it, but my guesses in this filed and without scientific basis.

Recently she started writing me again. Her tone is different. She seems close to honest and may be entirely so, as she may also be lying. She acknowledges my suspicion was correct but I had the wrong drugs (I know nothing of them). She says she was on pain-killers, had been hooked at Ochsner (where I think she had a total of 17 operations from an accident it is incredible she survived. As she put it, the drugs came like from vending machines. I have no way of knowing more than I have never seen anyone not a battle casualty with as many scars or any as long. She has a single one, with many clump marks, from the instep to the top of the thigh. Also large skin grafts, etc.

She says she was on heroin, is now on methadone when she can get it, is reluctant to go to the NO clinic and would like to kick it. She also says Ochsner is recommending further leg surgery, with a piece of the spine to replace a piece of the ankle(?), with no assurances of its success. She says she is now in a leg brace. She hasn't made up her mind on the operation. She was in DePauls but not long enough, after one of the attempted suicides. Her abused parents are not wealthy.

What her psychiatric history is I do not know, but I suspect she is schizo and enjoys illusions. My own hunch, if she makes the effort to kick it, is to wait until after the surgery or until she decides against it, if she does ~~xx~~ I fear N.O. is as bad a place to kick the habit as there is, for on leaving the treatment, all the old contacts and sources-and means-are there. But there is little that can be done about that. If our situation were better I'd have no question about trying to get her in Hopkins, an hour away, and then watching her for a while. But I do not know if we are up to it, with the pressures we now have. This kid is not well educated, but she has a capacity for original self-expression that is rare and entertaining. She says she'd like to try and write. So, another question, if she takes the treatments, withdraws and is here or elsewhere writing about drugs, is

that good therapy or bad? I do not believe she is at all paranoid, rather tending toward self-destructive instincts, but I think there is almost nobody she trusts as much as she does me. To this I think I can add respect.

If she could serve a socially-useful purpose, something I think she's never considered in her selfish lifetime (22) in writing such things, do you think that would help keep her off, help her want to stay off? I understand not too many make it. I am reminded of how I broke the habit of excessive drinking when I was younger than she. I was working on an a.m. paper and going to college. As I saw what was happening to the older men, then all young, I suddenly decided that, with the beginning of a session of the legislature and the extra and longer hours that mean, I'd be with them while they were drinking, pour every drink not taken from the bottle, and not touch a drop as long as the session ended. I did this on a month-long drunk and, beginning the first day of that session, stopped touching it. Even since I can take it or leave it. No problem. I know these things cannot be equated, but is the psychological principle applicable?

Any counsel or suggestions either of you now time for I'd appreciate.

My real reason is that I would like to help her if I think I can and I think it will not overburden a household already crammed with problems. But I also have a selfish purpose: I want to learn how she knew so much, what her source or sources were, for I am pretty well satisfied it was not first hand. However, she did, beyond any doubt, have solid dope, for I checked much out and learned much in doing it. I didn't begin to check it all out, ignored the most fantastic, but nothing I did try to check was false, incredibly enough, and even some of the fantastic was absolutely correct. And is she sharp. She once told me how to tell when I was getting through to a certain witness she knew I'd question. She described perfectly his reaction with his cigarette when he was just getting up tight. Once I spotted the signal, I moved in and got an absolutely astounding admission from him that I checked out separately and it was right. I know how she knew this. She knew that guy. But the rest is mystery. I suspect she knew some who was a blabbermouth, maybe more than one. You can see the value this would hold for me. But in thinking about this, rightly or wrongly, if she is here I have decided not to interrogate but to see if she volunteers. Unless this seems wrong, or the opportunity would in itself be an indicated therapy.

Best,